

VZCZCXRO4167
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHVJ #2931 3241719
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 201719Z NOV 06
FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4872
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JCS WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUFOAOA/USNIC SARAJEVO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SARAJEVO 002931

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

EUR FOR DICARLO, EUR/SCE FOR HOH, FOOKS AND STINCHCOMB, NSC
FOR BRAUN, OSD FOR FLORY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2015

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BK](#)

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: INAUGURAL SESSION OF BIH PARLIAMENT
COLLAPSES UNDER COALITION PRESSURE

Classified By: Political Counselor Michael J. Murphy, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: At the inaugural session of the BiH House of Representatives (HoR) held on November 20, delegates failed to agree on even the most mundane procedural issues, including the organization of the parliament and the election of the three co-speakers. What was thought to be a pre-cooked arrangement for the selection of the co-speakers unraveled when the largest Serb party, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) refused to agree to a vote, noting that a government coalition should be agreed prior to the election of the speakers in order to maximize the effectiveness of the future government and parliament. The session exposed some of Party for BiH's political weaknesses, since it had sought to engineer the speakership deal. The HoR will reconvene on Thursday, November 23, though it is unclear whether it will settle on new co-speakers then. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) At the inaugural session of the BiH HoR, Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) MP Nikola Spiric, one of the co-speakers of the HoR in the previous parliament and a leading contender to be Prime Minister in the next state government, announced that his party would not support selection of the co-speakers of the HoR until a decision had been made on the formation of a state government coalition. Prior to the session, the Bosniak Party of Democratic Action (SDA) and Party for BiH (SBiH) agreed to the election of Beriz Belkic of the Party for BiH (SBiH) and Martin Raguz of the Croatian Democratic Union-1990 (HDZ-1990) as Bosniak and Croat speakers, respectively, and Sulejman Tihic as co-speaker of the House of Peoples.

¶3. (C) Spiric's move caught SBiH, HDZ-1990, and SDA by surprise, and their disarray was visible during the session. Belkic was furious at Spiric, but was unable to garner the votes needed to stop him. SDA MPs simply sat on their hands and watched. The public failure made clear SBiH is not as close to concluding a coalition agreement with any party, except perhaps HDZ-1990, as the SBiH-leaning daily Dnevni Avaz claims. SBiH looked more like the other major parties' coalition partner of last resort rather than the Svengali of the Bosnian political scene.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Spiric is often cocky, and he certainly played to the galleries today, proudly flexing the SNSD's parliamentary muscle. Undoubtedly, Avaz and others will portray SNSD's decision to block a deal on the speakership as "Serb highhandedness," but there is a less sinister political

logic behind SNSD's actions. Spiric, the leading SNSD candidate for PM, may have been seeking to prevent the conflicts that could result if the parliamentary leadership comes from parties not included in the governing coalition, a sign of SNSD's interest in participating in an effective state-level government. The episode made several parliamentarians nervous about their parties' ability to form a government, however. Several approached us on the margins of the session and hinted that they hope the U.S. intervenes to guide coalition talks. END COMMENT.
MCELHANEY